

Serial No. 09/666,684
Atty. Doc. No. 00P7901US

REMARKS

Claims 7-8, 14-15, 19-20, and 22-23 are pending in the application. Claims 7-8, 14-15, and 19-20 have been allowed. Claim 22 is rejected. Claim 23 is objected to for being dependent upon rejected claim 22. In view of the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of the rejection of and objection to claims 22 and 23.

Allowed Claims

Claims 7-8, 14-15, 19-20, have been allowed. Applicants kindly thank the Examiner for her thorough examination and allowance of those claims.

Rejection of Claim 22 Under § 103

Claim 22 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 based on U.S. Patent No. 6,072,259 ("Kawabata") and U.S. Patent No. 4,160,926 ("Cope"). Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of the rejection based on the following remarks.

Modern generators utilize what is referred to as a step-down region at each end of the generator's stator core. A typical step-down region is illustrated in Applicants' Figure 4 (item 35'). As illustrated, each lamination in the step-down region has a progressively larger inner diameter. This changing diameter significantly improves the magnetic-flux characteristics of the stator core and the generator as a whole. However, the changing diameter leaves insufficient material near the end of the step-down regions to provide wedge lands for the wedges that hold the coils in place. As a result, the coils are unsupported near the end of the step-down regions. This lowers the harmonic frequency of the stator core and makes the generator more susceptible to vibration damage from harmonic resonance.

Serial No. 09/666,684
Atty. Doc. No. 00P7901US

Applicants' invention, as recited in claim 22, overcomes this problem by providing a method of supporting a coil by "radially supporting the bottom of end portions of the contents of a stator coil slot by the use of a coil support finger plate" with "wedge lands formed in the coil support finger plate." This unique approach makes it possible to support the coil up to the end of the step-down region and beyond (as illustrated by distance "X" in Figure 4), thus maximizing the length of coil that is supported and minimizing the chance of damage from harmonic resonance.

Neither Kawabata nor Cope nor their combination teach or suggest supporting a stator coil as recited in claim 22. In fact, neither Kabata nor Cope teach or suggest a fingerplate or a step-down region. The endplate 18 identified by the Examiner in Kawabata is not a fingerplate. As is well known in the art, fingerplates (like the one illustrated in Applicants' Figure 1) are rigid-structural supports with sloped or curved fingers that put a compressive load on the fingers of the outer laminations of the stator core. The endplate 18 disclosed in Kawabata is simply a somewhat thicker version of a core lamination. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious to one of skill in the art to arrive at Applicants' claimed invention in view of Kawabata and Cope. Accordingly, Applicants' respectfully request favorable reconsideration of the rejection of claim 22. Applicants also respectfully request withdrawal of the objection to claim 23.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, the application should not be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions concerning this paper or application, or if any issues remain, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney to

Serial No. 09/666,684
Atty. Doc. No. 00P7901US

resolve such issue or question. The commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

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Siemens Corporation
Intellectual Property Department
186 Wood Avenue South
Iselin, New Jersey 08830

By: T M B
Terrence M. Brennan
Registration No. 42,360
(407) 736-4149

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